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Message Text

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21
ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00

SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15

STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07

NSAE-00 USIA-06 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 /128 W
---------- 127092
R 181315Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB ICFTU DA
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SUBJ: ICFTU DEVELOPMENTS

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REF: BRUSSELS 5838

SUMMARY: AS REPORTED REFTEL, THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) IN BRUSSELS JUNE 26-27 DEALT MAINLY WITH PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING ICFTU CONGRESS IN MEXICO CITY IN OCTOBER. A SOURCE WHO ATTENDED TOLD THE LABATT THAT THE RESTRUCTURING OF TRADE UNION RELATIONSHIPS IN LATIN AMERICA WAS A MAJOR TOPIC AND THAT OTHER SUBJECTS TOUCHED UPON WERE THE NEW ICFTU LEADERSHIP AND THE STATE OF ICFTU FINANCES. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE IN THE DANISH TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (LO) WHO ATTENDED, THE JUNE 26-27 MEETING OF THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD WAS A RRATHER SIGNIFICANT SESSION. THE CONGRESS IN MEXICO CITY IN OCTOBER DOMINATED THE DISCUSSION APPARENTLY, BUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TOPIC DISCUSSED WAS THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL WORKERS ORGANIZATION (ORIT) AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ICFTU AND TO THE AFL-CIO. IT WAS DECIDED THAT THIS SUBJECT SHOULD BE AVOIDED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AT THE FORTHCOMING CONGRESS AND, TO THIS END, A COMMISSION WAS APPOINTED TO STUDY THE MATTER AND REPORT TO THE FIRST EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING AFTER THE CONGRESS. IF THE SUBJECT IS THUS RASIED AT THE CONGRESS BY LATIN AMERICAN DELEGATES, THE CONGRESS LEADERSHIP WOULD BE ABLE TO CUT OFF DISCUSSION BY REFERENCE TO THE PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE COMMISSION. APPOINTED AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION WERE THE NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AUGMENTED BY ONE CANADIAN AND A CARBBBEAN REPRESENTATIVE, F. WILCOTT, FROM BABADOS.

2. LO PRESIDENT THOMAS NIELSEN ELABORATED ON THIS POINT IN A RECENT MEETING WITH GLENN WATTS, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, DURNG THE LATTER'S VISIT IN COPENHAGEN, JULY 8-10. NIELSEN SAID THAT THE ICFTU DID NOT WISH TO HAVE A CONFRONTATION WITH THE AFL-CIO OVER THE ORIT ISSUE. THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION WAS INSTRUCTED TO LEAVE AN OPEN DOOR FOR AFL-CIO
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PARTICIPATION IN A NEW ORGANIZATION. NIELSEN TOLD WATTS, HOWEVER, THAT FROM THE EUROPEAN POINT OF VIEW THE PRESENT SITUATION IN ORIT HAS TWO MAJOR DEFICIENCIES: THE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN INEFFECTIVE; AND THE ORGANIZATION'S STATUTORY RELATIONSHIP TO THE ICFTU IS UNCLEAR.

3. ALTHOUGH NIELSEN WISHES TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH THE AFL-CIO TACTICALLY, HE APPARENTLY FEELS

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STRONGLY THAT ORIT HAS BEEN TOO SUBORDINATE TO THE AFL-CIO. IN A STRONG SPEECH TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, NIELSEN REPORTEDLY URGED THE LATIN AMERICANS TO MAKE A DEFINITE DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION.

4. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT ITEM DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING WAS A PROPOSED DEAL FOR A CHANGE IN THE ICFTU LEADERSHIP. THIS HAD EARLIER BEEN DISCUSSED WITH OTTO KERSTEN IN COPENHAGEN AFTER THE HELSINKI MEETING OF THE NORDIC TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (NTUC) LAST APRIL. ACCORDING TO THIS PACKAGE DEAL, P. P. NARAYANAN OF MALAYSIA WOULD BECOME THE NEXT ICFTU PRESIDENT, WITH THOMAS NIELSEN BECOMING CHAIRMAN OF AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF 7 TO 9 VOTE PRESIDENTS WHICH WOULD DIRECT THE DAILY WORK AND HANDLE FINANCIAL MATTERS. IN EFFECT, NARAYANAN WOULD BE WORLDWIDE PRESIDENT, WHILE NIELSEN ANFOTTO KERSTEN WOULD CONSTITUTE THE ICFTU'S EUROPEAN OPERATIONAL BASE. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THIS DEAL HAS NARAYANANA'S AND KERSTEN'S APPROVAL. IT HAS, HOWEVER, NOT DEFINITELY BEEN SUPPORTED BY NIELSEN'S NORDIC COLLEAGUES, AND THE ATTITUDE OF OTHER TRADE UNION LEADERS IN EUROPE IS UNKNOWN.

5. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THIS PACKAGE DEAL WOULD REQUIRE, AND IS RELATED TO, AN AMENDEMNT OF THE ICFTU CONSTITUTION. OTHER CHANGES WOULD PROVIDE FOR A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD BETWEEN CONGRESSES (INSTEAD OF THREE) AND A SINGLE, ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

6. THE LO SOURCE ALSO SAID THAT THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF FINANCES HAD ARISEN BUT CLAIMED THAT NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON THIS POINT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING PROCEEDINGS, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COPENH02032
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750250-0417
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750739/aaaabivc.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SIL
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BRUSSELS 5838
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <29 SEP 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICFTU DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: ELAB, DA, ICFTU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006